



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

March 10, 2006

News Release

ICE arrests 375 gang members & associates in two-week enforcement action **-- Latest actions under Operation Community Shield include 4 arrests in Des Moines and Marshalltown --**

DES MOINES, Iowa – Four members of violent street gangs were arrested in Des Moines and Marshalltown and face deportation as a result of a two-week operation that netted more than 375 nationwide. The operation was conducted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) special agents as a joint effort with other law enforcement agencies.

The arrests were the latest under the auspices of “Operation Community Shield,” a comprehensive initiative launched by ICE roughly one year ago to disrupt and dismantle transnational, violent street gangs. In the past year, Operation Community Shield has resulted in the arrest of 2,388 members of 239 different gangs. Fifty-one of those arrested were gang leaders. Approximately 922 of those arrested were from the violent street gang Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13). Those arrested under Operation Community Shield are either prosecuted criminally or removed from the country through immigration proceedings. To date, 533 have been charged criminally, while 1,855 have been hit with administrative immigration charges.

The Des Moines ICE office arrested one member of the MS-13 gang and three members of the Surenos (SUR-13) gang. Two were arrested in Des Moines and two in Marshalltown, Iowa. All are nationals of Mexico and had entered the United States illegally. The Des Moines ICE office has arrested a total of 29 gang members and associates since Operation Community Shield began.

In the latest enforcement action, which began on Feb. 24 and continued until yesterday, ICE teamed up with its law enforcement partners to target gang members in 23 states. The largest number of arrests occurred in Dallas (44), San Diego (41), Washington, D.C. (22), Miami (22), and Raleigh (19). Those arrested in this latest action included members of MS-13, as well as Surenos, 18th Street Gang, Latin Kings, Vatos Locos, Bloods, Crips, Armenian Power, Street Thug Criminals, Brown Pride, Asian Dragon Family, Big Time Killers, Avenue Assassins, Spanish Gangster Disciples and Hermanos Pistoleros Latinos.

More than 260 of the 375 individuals arrested in the two-week operation have past criminal records, most of them violent. Six of those arrested were gang leaders. Furthermore, ICE agents arrested 73 of the individuals on new criminal charges that range from drug violations, to firearms violations, to charges of re-entering the country after deportation. The remaining individuals are charged with administrative immigration violations and have been placed into deportation proceedings.

Those arrested by the Des Moines office include twin brothers Noe Hernandez-Angeles and Nahum Hernandez-Angeles, 18, citizens of Mexico. Both are members of the Surenos street gang and were arrested in Marshalltown. Noe also has a conviction for third-degree burglary and Nahum a conviction for second-degree arson.

ICE special agents were assisted in the arrests by the Marshalltown Police Department and the Des Moines Police Department.

“This operation is a prime example of how cooperation among local and federal law enforcement authorities can make our communities safer,” said ICE Resident Agent in Charge Estela Biesemeyer. “Now that these gang members are off the streets, ICE will use its unique law enforcement authority to ultimately remove them from the country.”

About Operation Community Shield

Operation Community Shield was launched in February 2005 after a threat assessment by all ICE field offices identified MS-13 as one of the largest and most violent street gangs in the United States. The assessment found that most of the gang members were foreign-born, in the United States illegally, had prior criminal convictions, and/or were involved in crimes that made them subject to ICE’s broad immigration and customs authorities.

ICE kicked off Operation Community Shield with an enforcement operation that resulted in the arrest of more than 100 members of MS-13. In the months that followed, ICE agents nationwide joined ranks and continued targeting MS-13 members in their jurisdictions. In May 2005, ICE expanded Operation Community Shield to include all criminal street gangs and prison gangs with foreign-born members.

Thus far, ICE agents from 76 field offices, working with law enforcement agencies nationwide, have arrested a total of 2,388 suspected street gang members and associates. These apprehensions include 533 criminal arrests and 1,855 administrative arrests. More than 1,075 of these suspects have violent criminal histories. As part of the operation, ICE agents have also seized more than 117 firearms.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.